

Harriet Tubman Day in Delaware proclaimed

Governor Jack Markell has issued a proclamation declaring March 10, 2014 as Harriet Tubman Day in Delaware in commemoration of the 101st anniversary of the death of the noted Underground Railroad conductor. The proclamation was delivered by Chief Deputy Secretary of State Rick Geisenberger in a March 6, 2014 ceremony at Dover's [Old State House](#).



Born a slave in 1820, Harriet Tubman is probably the most well-known figure on the Underground Railroad. She is credited with personally escorting over 300 slaves to freedom on more than 20 separate trips through Maryland and Delaware. These escapes included her own from a Dorchester County, Md. farm in 1849.

Tubman was an abolitionist, humanitarian and Union spy during the Civil War. Her 100 percent success rate in helping slaves escape to freedom made her a legend throughout the country. She is documented as traveling through Sussex and Kent counties in Delaware with the aid of local black families, and she frequently collaborated with noted abolitionist Thomas Garrett of Wilmington. Their role is featured prominently in the exhibit [“An Illegal Activity: The Underground Railroad in Delaware”](#) which is currently on display at the First State

Heritage Welcome Center and Galleries in Dover. After the war, Tubman settled in Auburn, N.Y. and died there on March 10, 1913. This date is now celebrated nationally as [Harriet Tubman Day](#).



In addition to comments by Geisenberger, the Harriet Tubman Day proclamation ceremony included an invocation by the Rev. Rita Mishoe Paige, pastor of Star Hill African Methodist Episcopal Church in Dover; reflections by state Rep. Donald Blakey; and comments by Ann Gravatt from the Delaware Department of Transportation who discussed the [Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway](#), a series of Delaware roads that follow routes Tubman utilized when leading slaves from captivity in Maryland, through Delaware, to relative freedom in Pennsylvania. The ceremony was hosted by Tim Slavin, director of the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs.

In his comments, Geisenberger reflected on the words of the nation's Pledge of Allegiance, noting that there was a time, not long ago, when "liberty and justice for all" was denied to Americans of African descent, and that the words of the pledge were only fully realized through the tireless efforts of heroes such as Harriet Tubman. Commenting on her 100 percent success rate as a conductor on the Underground Railroad,

Tubman (as portrayed by Blakey) noted, "I never had a train go off the track and I never lost a passenger."